

## THE BEDFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### WILL HOLD ITS 33<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL HISTORY BANQUET

The Bedford County Historical Society will be holding its Annual History Banquet on Saturday, April 28, 2018, at 6:00 pm at the Hall at Kinton's Knob (BCHS, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor).

The Bertha Restoration Committee (Jay Speicher, Rocky Fetter, and Dave Shedlock) will be honored as the Historians of the Year for 2017. The Historian of the Year Committee has selected these three men, Jay Speicher, Rocky Fetter, and Dave Shedlock, for their work to restore Bertha, a 1931 LaFrance fire truck, originally purchased in January 1931 by the Bedford Fire Department and in use until 1972. In 2004, the Fire Department began discussing how to restore this fire engine. With a bid of over \$150,000 from an outside agency, the committee chose to undertake the restoration themselves. Many painstaking hours were spent to preserve as many original pieces as possible, including the original wooden ladder, brass fire extinguishers, brass and nickel nozzles, a 1931 glass handlight, and chain-driven wheels. The wooden running boards were replaced, and a new oak hose bed was installed to maintain the integrity of the original design. The lights and siren were rewired, and engine work included rebuilding the carburetor, repacking the water pump, and rodding the radiator. The original gas tank and water tank had corroded and rusted, so new tanks were fabricated to replicate the original design. The seat cushions were reupholstered with leather, and all of the dull, faded paint on the exterior was given a complete update. Every inch of Bertha was cleaned, shined, and polished.

The committee members spent hundreds of hours restoring Bertha bumper-to-bumper, and Bertha was driven in the Veteran's Day parade in Bedford in November 2017. This proudly displayed one of Bedford Fire Department's oldest relics.

2018 continues the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World War I, and the Society is please to host for the banquet this year General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, portrayed by actor/historian David Wayne Shuey. Shuey offers his 1<sup>st</sup> person portrayal of one of America's iconic heroes to honor this great military leader and the millions of men and women who served under his command as he educates and entertains history buffs of all ages. His national tour began last year in Kansas City on the anniversary of the U.S. entry into WWI to commemorate the Centennial of the Great War. "PERSHING – Generally Speaking" has included countless performances on college campuses, parades, and other patriotic and historical events throughout the nation and will soon offer a discussion of the actor's upcoming book: "Playing Pershing" scheduled for a spring release.

General John Pershing led African-American troops (Buffalo Soldiers) in campaigns in the Western States and against the Spanish in Cuba. He successfully engaged Islamic insurgents in the Philippines and defended our Mexican border against terroristic guerilla attacks.

Throughout his four decades of service, he trained and led countless officers who went on to greatness, including Douglass MacArthur, George Patton and George C. Marshall, all of whom served under him as the American “Doughboys” brought an end to World War One in 1918.

Pershing was a stoic figure for the eyes of the world as he led his troops in many conflicts and expeditions. This actor’s portrayal of a complex leader embodies that image while revealing a more personal side of the man. Pershing faced great danger leading troops in combat and later engaged political and societal changes in his various military assignments. But no event challenged him more than the tragic loss of his wife and three daughters in a fire while he was protecting our nation’s southern border. Shuey as Pershing will speak to that loss and the inner strength required go on to lead the American Expeditionary Force in the conclusion of “The War to End All Wars”.

“I’ve done extensive research on various military leaders from our nation’s past for my portrayals, but none rival Pershing’s variety of experiences and strategic successes,” said Shuey. “Telling his story in his voice enables me to honor this great leader while enlightening others as to America’s challenges and achievements one hundred years ago. He is someone from whom we could learn many lessons that would still serve us well today.”

Tickets are \$25 each. For tickets or more information, contact the Society at (814)623-2011, email [bedfordhistory@embarqmail.com](mailto:bedfordhistory@embarqmail.com), visit our website [www.bedfordpahistory.com](http://www.bedfordpahistory.com), or stop in at 6441 Lincoln Hwy, Bedford.

# # #